

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for granting an interview on May 15, 2007. This paper follows up on that interview, and, in part, includes the substance of the interview (MPEP 713.04) and supplements the Interview Summary Record (PTOL-43) of May 15, 2007.

Applicant also gratefully acknowledges that the prior art rejections of claims 5-27 as obvious in view of the Venable, Oashi and Wood references, in various combinations, have been withdrawn.

The foregoing Amendment in claim 5 corrects a typographical error in this claim as presented in the Amendment filed on June 30, 2007. The word "section" is inserted in line 6 after "said user interface," first occurrence, to provide a clear antecedent basis for this phrase, namely, the "user interface section" of the printer unit in line 2 of claim 5.

Applicants also note that there was a typographical error in the Remarks section of the Response filed on January 3, 2007. On page 3, third line from the bottom, "correct" should be "connect."

Applicants respectfully traverse the new rejection of claims 5-27 under the judicially created double patenting doctrine in view of the commonly-assigned U.S. Patent No. 7,173,724 to Nomura et al.

At the interview, the argument focused on the rejection of independent claims 5, 10, 19, 20, and 26 as detailed by the Examiner in the pending Office Action. In each instance, the Examiner cited Col. 6, lines 27-30, Fig. 2; Col. 9, lines 24-33, and Col. 10, lines 22-24 of Nomura '724 in support of the rejection. With respect to claim 19, the Examiner added a citation to Col. 14, lines 52-67. As discussed at the interview, and again below, Nomura '724 does not teach or suggest that the smaller, printer interface changes its display state, or its ability to accept inputs, in response to user inputs at the other, scanner interface. At Col. 10, lines 33-36, the printer display is described as "not

displaying information," and at lines 40-44, it is express that the printer controller wholly controls the combined printer and scanner.

In broad overview, with the present invention, when information is displayed and operation instructions are entered by using one of operation panels of a printer and a scanner, the other one of operation panels can be used, if necessary, in order to carry out the communication of the information and the entry of the operation instructions from the user.

The present invention provides user interfaces (operation panels) such that the other one of the operation panels becomes available to carry out the display of the information to the user and for the entry of the operation instructions from the user. This attains better operability and makes it easier for a user to grasp the information. According to the present invention, where the other one of the operation panels can be used if necessary (to perform the display and the entry of instructions), it is possible to use both the operation panels, if necessary, in order to give the apparatus(es) instructions regarding conditions with which the apparatus(es) should perform its (their) operation(s). These user interfaces make it possible for the user to instruct the operations of the combined apparatuses in a smoother manner.

By contrast, the point of the U.S. '724 patent to Nomura is that where a system is constructed by linking a printer unit and a scanner unit, each having an operation panel, the printer unit controls both the operation panels and the printer unit determines how to operate the respective operation panels. In Nomura '724, when the controller of the printer detects that the scanner is connected to the printer, it becomes possible to display various information of the system by using the operation panel of the scanner effectively, and to operate the whole system in response to the content of the instructions entered via the operation panel of the scanner.

The Nomura '724 patent is directed to a switching control for switching the operation panels depending on whether the scanner and the printer are linked with each other or not. The switching control operates so that when the scanner and the printer have their operation panels linked with each other thereby constituting an image

processing apparatus, the controller of the printer performs such a switching operation to allow the use of the operation panel of the scanner. In contrast, the present invention is directed to the additional use of the one of the operation panels, which is made temporally operable according to the operation state, in addition to the other one of the operation panels by which the entry of operation instructions is basically carried out. The presently claimed interfaces and their mode of operation is therefore basically different from those described and claimed in the Nomura '724 patent.

Turning to the specific claims, as to claim 5, the Examiner notes that Nomura '724 has display section 301 (large-sized LCD) of the scanner 3 and the display section 221 (small-sized LCD) of the printer are provided. At Cols. 11 and 12, and in Figs. 8 to 14, and the explanation thereof, Nomura discloses that when an event occurs which should be reported to the user to attract the user's attention (e.g., sheet jamming, sheet storage, need of replacement of a replacement unit, etc.), the display section 301 displays detailed information on the event, while the display section 221 of the printer 2 displays the information on the printer job.

Therefore, the Nomura '724 patent does not disclose an arrangement in which the display state on a display section of one of the printer and the scanner is changed according to a command entered via the other. Nomura '724 merely teaches that when information to be reported to the user for his attention occurs during an operation, the detailed information thereof is displayed on the large-sized LCD, while the printer information is displayed on the small-sized LCD.

Moreover, at column 12, line 67 to column 13, line 4, Nomura '724 discloses that each of the printer and the scanner includes a display section, and that (1) at least one of the display sections displays in different display formats for non-systematic manner and for systematic manner (the displaying in the non-systematic manner is for the case where the printer and the scanner are independently used, while the displaying in the systematic manner is for the case where the printer and scanner are used in combination, systematically) and (2) the at least one of the display sections

displays the information on the whole system when it displays in the systematic manner.

Nomura '724 teaches with respect to a second embodiment that (i) the printer 400 is provided with a first user interface section for displaying information on the first image processing, while the scanner 500 is provided with a second user interface section for displaying information on the second image processing, (ii) the printer 400 and the scanner 500 are linked with each other via an interface section, and (iii) the printer 400 makes the first user interface section thereof inoperative when the printer 400 confirms that the first image processing section and the second image processing section are connected to each other via the interface section. See Column 14, lines 8 to 24 discussing the second embodiment.

In other words, the Nomura '724 specification regarding the second embodiment clearly explains that the printer 400 makes the first user interface section of the printer 400 inoperative when the printer 400 confirms that the first image processing section and the second image processing section are connected to each other via the interface section. It is therefore impossible to enter a command via the first user interface, and the second user interface section cannot change its display state in response to a command entered via the first interface section.

These differences, as noted at the interview, are also reflected in the "wherein" clause of pending claim 5 and Nomura '724 claim 1 which recites a combination of a linked printer and scanner and printer control over the combined system.

In conclusion, the Nomura '724 patent does not disclose or suggest the feature of claim 5 that "said user interface section of said printer unit and said user interface section of said scanner unit are arranged such that in response to a command entered via one of these user interface sections, the other user interface section changes its display state."

Claims 6 to 9 are directly or indirectly dependent from claim 5. They are patentably distinct for the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 5.

Claim 10 defines the combined use of said printer unit and said scanner unit, where the display section of the printer unit is set to be effective if a predetermined condition is satisfied, and if not, only the display section of the scanner unit is set to be effective. Nomura '724 does not disclose or suggest such an arrangement. When the printer 400 confirms that the first image processing section and the second image processing section are linked via the interface section, the first interface section of the printer 400 is made operable or the second user interface section of the scanner 500 is made operable depending on whether a predetermined condition is satisfied or not. This does not teach the features of claim 10.

Claims 11-18 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 10. They likewise define combinations of features not taught or suggested by Nomura '724.

With respect to claim 13, as noted in the Interview Summary, Nomura Fig. 21 shows that the printer display is concealed by the scanner when the printer and scanner are combined. As also noted at the interview, Fig. 31 of the present application illustrates this claimed feature.

Nomura '724 discloses that the printer 400 and the scanner 500 are installed in such a manner that a main body of the scanner 500 is supported in a position above the printer 400 by supporting sections, so as to overlap the printer 400. A display section of the printer 400 is provided on a top surface of the printer 400, the display section displaying information regarding operation instructions or an operations state of the printer 400 mainly (see Column 14, lines 34 to 37). Nomura does not disclose the arrangement where the display section of the printer 400 is invisible to the user because the display section of the printer 400 is provided on the upper surface on the back surface side of the printer 400.

The portions of the Nomura patent cited by the Examiner (column 6, lines 27-30, Fig. 2, column 9, lines 24-33, column 10, lines 22-24) do not disclose this feature of claim 19.

Claim 20 parallels claim 5, and distinguishes over Nomura '724 for the same reasons. In rejecting this claim, the Examiner also cited column 14, lines 61-67. However, this portion discloses (i) that the display panel displays the detailed information or an operation instructions key group, (ii) that instructions of the various modes are inputted to the system by pressing the tablet in accordance with the displayed information, and (iii) that an LED display section 502 for displaying a state of the system in a simple manner, and an operation key group 503 for instructing the system to change to another various mode are provided. However, Nomura '724 does not disclose or suggest the input acceptance state of the printer 400 is changed in response to the operation input entered via the scanner 500.

With respect to claims 26 and 27, the foregoing comments on claim 5 apply, and these claims are also patentably distinct over the Nomura '724 U.S. patent.

In view of the foregoing amendment and the accompanying Remarks, Applicants urge that the pending claims are patentably distinct over the U.S. Nomura '724 patent, and that this application is in condition for allowance.

Dated: May 21, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Peter J. Manus

Registration No.: 26,766
EDWARDS ANGELL PALMER & DODGE
LLP
P.O. Box 55874
Boston, Massachusetts 02205
(617) 517-5530
Attorneys/Agents For Applicant